


Kentucky Teacher

March 2009

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



Educator turns technology 'survival' into success

Page 9

What's Inside

School laboratory manual now available to teachers.....	2	Program busts myth about mathematics.....	8
Commissioner's Comments	3	Two Kentucky teachers win thousands for schools	10
Veterans Park building strong academic tradition	4	Kentucky at forefront of teacher leadership	11
Changes to KERA hot topic at board meeting.....	5	National Board certification daunting, rewarding	12
NELCO gives students leg up on the job market	6	News for school leaders	13
LaBarbara learning, leading through U.S.-Japan program	7	Owensboro students go on history treasure hunt	16



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lexington, Kentucky
Permit No. 513

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Interim Commissioner of Education
ELAINE FARRIS

Director, Division of Communications
LISA GROSS

Editor
STEPHANIE SIRIA

Staff Writers
SUSAN RIDDELL
MATTHEW TUNGATE

Graphic Designer
JOHN BOONE

Photographer
AMY WALLOT

Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to *Kentucky Teacher*, 612 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

www.education.ky.gov

The Kentucky Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. Alternate formats of this publication are available upon request.

Printed with state funds by LexPress,
Lexington, Ky., on recycled paper
ISSN 1526-3584

Front cover: Vickie Elswick helps 7th-grade student Starr Caldwell at Boyd County Middle School. Photo by Amy Wallot

Education Week releases 13th-annual 'Quality Counts' report

For its 13th annual "Quality Counts" report, *Education Week* looked at state efforts to meet the needs of English-language learners (ELLs).

This year, states are rated in three areas: the Chance for Success index, which is based on 13 indicators; transitions and alignment; and school finance. Researchers did not seek updated information on the teaching profession or standards, assessments and accountability – updated data in those categories will be presented in 2010.

States received letter and numerical grades (on a scale of 0-100) in the three categories.

Kentucky's rank among states in the Chance for Success category was 40th. The five highest-ranking states in that category were Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maryland. Since the Chance for Success category looks at variables such as income, parental education, employment and adult educational attainment, Kentucky did not fare well.

The Chance for Success index gives the leading state 100 points on a particular indicator. Other states earn or lose points in proportion to the gaps between them and the leader. The index's indicators include percentages of children:

- in high-poverty homes
- with at least one parent who holds a postsecondary degree
- enrolled in preschool and kindergarten
- scoring at proficient or above on NAEP
- who graduate from high school on time

	KENTUCKY	NATION
Chance for Success	C (74.3)	C+ (78.9)
Transitions and Alignment	C (75)	C (75.2)
School Finance	C- (72.3)	C+ (77.2)

The index also includes percentages of adults who:

- are enrolled in postsecondary institutions or hold a degree
- have steady employment

In the transitions and alignment category, Kentucky's rank was 22nd. The five highest-ranking states were Maryland, New Mexico, West Virginia, New York and Tennessee. Kentucky did not meet criteria for a formal definition of school readiness; assessment of school readiness; interventions for students who are not ready for school; use of statewide assessment results for college placement/admissions/scholarships; or career-tech diplomas.

In the school finance category, Kentucky's rank was 35th. The five highest-ranking states were Rhode Island, Wyoming, Vermont, New Jersey and Connecticut. Kentucky lost ground in this category due to low per-pupil expenditures (only 12 states had lower average amounts, and Kentucky's average was nearly \$1,300 less than the national average) and in the percentage of students in districts at which the per-pupil expenditure is at or above the U.S. average (only eight states had lower percentages).

In keeping with its focus on English-language learners, "Quality Counts" notes that "... the achievement gap between English-learners and all public school students is significant." Specifics related to ELLs and Kentucky include:

- Kentucky and 12 other states have seen growth of more than 200 percent in ELL enrollment from 1995 to 2005.
- Kentucky will need an additional 6.3 percent of certified teachers for ELL Title III programs in the next five years. Nationwide, the need is for an additional 38.4 percent.
- In ELL assessments, 6.2 percent of Kentucky's students attain proficiency. Nationwide, the average is 16.9 percent.

MORE INFO ...

www.edweek.org
(Requires Web subscription to view full report.)

School laboratory manual now available to teachers

Hazardous materials can be found in many programs and areas within a school. These include art classrooms; science stockrooms and laboratories; auto, metal and wood shop classes; photography darkrooms; printing rooms; and grounds maintenance and custodial departments.

Often, these chemicals are not well managed. They are stored in the wrong place, in decrepit containers and alongside other chemicals with which they are incompatible. Because staff often does not know what to do with old chemicals that are no longer used, the chemicals are kept, sometimes for decades, after which time many chemicals deteriorate, become contaminated or even unstable.

The Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Compliance Assistance offers guidance through its newly released *School Laboratory Management and Chemical Cleanout Manual*.

This manual, which is available to download in PDF format, will provide information to help schools establish and maintain Best Management Practices for the selection, purchasing, storage, safe handling and proper disposal of chemicals used in schools. Topics covered in the manual include high-risk chemicals, personal protective equipment, spill management, universal waste rule and more.

This manual provides a safe environment for students, teachers, and staff, while simultaneously ensuring compliance with applicable regulations.

MORE INFO ...

www.dca.ky.gov

Talk to the Experts ...

About Certification

Education Professional
Standards Board
100 Airport Road, 3rd Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4606
Fax: (502) 564-7080
Toll Free: (888) 598-7667
www.kyepsb.net

About Retirement

Kentucky Teachers'
Retirement System
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3868
Phone: (502) 848-8500
Fax: (502) 573-0199
Toll Free: (800) 618-1687
<http://ktrs.ky.gov>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Removing barriers to reading

AmeriCorps worker Rhonda Sizemore works with freshman Monica Wright during Carbo Reading Lab activities at Fairview High School (Fairview Independent). This is the first year Fairview High has implemented the program, which serves students in all grade levels to take away any barriers that students have while reading.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Elaine Farris, Interim Commissioner of Education

Budget reductions present challenges for progress

I certainly was not expecting to be writing a column for *Kentucky Teacher* this school year. As you read in February's issue, I have been asked to serve as interim commissioner following the resignation of Commissioner Jon E. Draud. I worked closely with him as he closed out his tenure in January. The search has already begun to find a new permanent commissioner and may take several months. We hope to have a new commissioner this calendar year.



Farris

However, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff and I continue to focus on the goal of proficiency for all by 2014, despite the budget crisis Kentucky is currently experiencing. Continuity in this agency's work is my top priority, and the Kentucky Board of Education's goal of proficiency for all students is where our work is focused.

As a former superintendent, I understand the challenges your school districts face, particularly in the areas of budgets and resources. My experience as an educator and administrator will help guide my decision-making process.

Last December, the State Budget Director's Office asked the Kentucky Department of Education to submit a plan for a 2 percent mid-year budget reduction, excluding Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funds. For the Kentucky Department of Education, that included our agency's operating expenses and state funding for the state's public school system.

Section 183 of the Kentucky Constitution mandates that the General Assembly, by appropriate legislation, provide for an efficient system of public schools throughout the state. Related court cases and Attorney General's opinions indicate that the state must provide adequate funding for the public school system. While the definition of "adequate" may differ depending on the circumstances, significant reductions to P-12 programs are problematic in this context.

A 2 percent reduction to the state's P-12 education budget would amount to approximately \$7 million. In working with the state's superintendents, KDE was able to present a

plan to the Kentucky Board of Education for review at its January meeting.

The largest proportion of the total reduction is nearly \$6.1 million and will be realized through a reduction in grants allocated to local school districts for fiscal year 2008-09. The current plan is to accomplish this by reducing current textbook allocations by 28 percent. At the time of this publication's printing, we are awaiting direction on whether this plan is acceptable.

Textbook funding reductions will have an impact on learning and educational progress, since materials are integral parts of the educational curriculum. However, this option appears to result in the least immediate student impact.

Because of the current-year reductions to the Flexible Focus Funds, which include professional development, safe schools, extended school services and others, a number of programs that directly affect students have seen cuts:

- elimination of highly successful daytime programming for at-risk students
- decreases in the number of hours that qualified tutors are scheduled to provide instruction
- significant reduction or elimination of alternative-school programs
- 50 percent reduction in Safe School Assessments for fiscal year 2008-09
- 50 percent reduction in regional school safety trainings
- significant reductions in professional development opportunities, along with literacy and math coaches and mentors

The operations budget for the Department of Education was reduced by approximately \$1.3 million in July of last year. Staff has reduced travel, delayed filling vacant positions and deferred operating expenditures to meet that reduction. An additional 2 percent reduction would require further cuts totaling \$984,500. This General Fund reduction will be realized through vacancy management within the department and operating cost reductions for the remainder of the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

This continuing pattern of administrative and staffing reduction threatens the ability of KDE to properly fulfill its statutory mission to support local school districts and to monitor and implement educational pro-

grams. Since 2001, the Kentucky Department of Education has lost 219 positions, a 28 percent reduction in the agency's workforce.

However, KDE must absorb these budget reductions to reduce the burden upon school district resources.

Perceptions about public education and funding have been misinformed over the past few years. There is a belief that public education has been "spared" the budget reductions faced by other state agencies. Over a number of years, funds appropriated to the Department of Education have lapsed to the credit of the state General Fund, even when there have been program needs that have gone unmet as a result.

I know that this is not positive news. But, KDE staff and I understand that you can't do your jobs effectively without support, and I'm encouraging budget officials to consider the full impact on the state's public school system as they work to meet

the demands of this tight budget.

It is crucial that we communicate with each other during this time. Input and feedback from educators, parents and others are vital, and I will be asking you to share your knowledge, concerns and suggestions as we move through the 2009 legislative session and beyond.

Kentucky has shown great progress since the 1990s, and strong, steady funding is the key to maintaining that progress and getting all schools to proficiency.

The Kentucky Board of Education continues to emphasize that, in spite of budget cuts, we still must get the job done. Our mission is certain: to ensure that every child is proficient and prepared for success. I know that is your primary goal, and together, we can accomplish it.

(Contact Interim Commissioner Farris on this topic at elaine.farris@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Snow day

Franklin County High School sophomore Zac Courtney and Anderson County Middle School 6th-grade student Bryan Courtney ride an inner tube in Frankfort during a snow day on Jan. 30. The kids were taking advantage of a snow/ice storm that plowed through Kentucky, leaving many school districts closed.

Veterans Park building strong academic tradition

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Having opened its doors in 1997, Veterans Park Elementary School (Fayette County) may not have long-standing traditions passed down through the years.

But the school is setting itself up to build rich ones in academics and overall excellence.

The school recently earned its first national Blue Ribbon School award, setting the bar high for the future.

The Blue Ribbon School award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"Veterans Park Elementary's tradition of excellence is built on a strong intentional foundation of positive school climate, culture, high expectations, teamwork and parent involvement," Principal Amy McVey said. "Our intentional culture and climate-building take place on a daily basis to assure accountability and success for all students in a non-threatening atmosphere for teachers. We are able to combine a welcoming, kid-friendly atmosphere with high standards for every child so that learning and school is fun for all our students and our staff."

Intermediate teacher Kay Isaacs, who has been at Veterans Park since it opened, agreed that student achievement is the school's primary focus.

"I think Veterans Park is a Blue Ribbon School because every person in our school — including teachers, custodians, cafeteria workers and others — works for the best interests of every student," Isaacs said. "Everyone's goal is to ensure student success in all areas."

Isaacs said her school has made significant gains in arts and humanities, social studies and on-demand writing in recent years. McVey added that the K-5 school



Photo by Amy Wallot

Teacher Kim Walker helps kindergarten student Dezirhya Taylor with her writing assignment during class at Veterans Park Elementary School (Fayette County).

had already established high marks in those and other core content areas and was enjoying consistent success in testing.

"We are proud of constant success in all academic areas because of the focus and teamwork that our staff works so very hard to maintain," said McVey, who is in her fifth year as the school's principal. "We have found that the more we depend, collaborate and work together as a staff, the more our students succeed. As we began to evaluate in-depth both student work and the level of our expectations in our weekly team meetings, we have found that the rigor across the board has just become more and more consistent. With this consistency, we see that all our students continue to achieve at high levels because that is our expectation, and we will settle for nothing less."

In 2007, Veterans Park's accountability index was 122.7, but the school doesn't rest on its assessment laurels.

The school also uses the Developmental Reading Assessment, the

Measures of Academic Progress, Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation and the Fayette County district's Mathematics Standards test, a pencil/paper test measuring a student's skill in computation, number sense, fractions, geometry, measurement and algebraic ideas.

While strong academics and assessment are key elements of Veterans Park's success, McVey said the school also places a high priority on giving back to the community. In turn, these service projects facilitate student learning.

"We have a variety of strong programs that support student learning, including a community service program that partners with our PTA," McVey said. "This program is called Watch Us SHINE (Students Helping Individuals, Neighbors and the Environment)."

"It teaches our students to give back to the community on a monthly basis," she added. "We collect food for God's Pantry, toiletries for our veterans, host a blood drive, participate in the Juvenile Diabetes Walk and more. Each month our

PTA sponsors a community service project that is introduced and explained in every classroom. It is a true joy to see our students learning to give back to the community at such a young age."

Last year, the PTA and parents of Veterans Park were awarded the National PTA School of Excellence Award for Parent Involvement.

"They work on a daily basis with our staff to assure that we have a welcoming, open and supportive environment for all our families," McVey said.

That partnership is much like what goes on between staff members at the school.

"Our priority is collaboration and teamwork for everything we do at Veterans Park," McVey said. "Our students succeed because the staff is very intentional and structured about everything it does. The structures that are in place start in June with long-range planning for next year and are carried on through the entire school year with weekly team meetings, monthly grade-level meetings and built-in collaboration across all subject areas. Teachers

This is the third profile in a series about the four Kentucky Blue Ribbon Schools. The February issue of *Kentucky Teacher* featured May Valley Elementary School (Floyd County) and the April issue will feature White Hall Elementary School (Madison County). Highland Elementary School (Davies County) was featured in the December-January issue.

spend countless hours collaborating with their peers, both vertically and horizontally aligning content, developing instructional strategies and creating assessments to assure that every child is getting the same exposure to the required curriculum and high-quality teaching."

"The faculty is like a family," Isaacs added. "We have monthly potluck lunches and after-school social activities throughout the year, and we celebrate the successes of faculty, staff and students."

Not willing to become complacent, Veterans Park makes every effort to keep moving forward, aiming to build on that tradition of family, consistency and strong academic success.

"For a school that opened 12 years ago ... we are constantly striving to continue the well-established tradition of excellence," McVey said. "We opened as a school that was on the cutting edge of technology and are constantly updating and training our staff with the latest tools to enhance our instruction and student achievement."

"Thanks to a district-supported initiative, we installed 10 'smart' classrooms in January," she added. "With the SBDM council's goal to set aside all extra funds for the rest of the year, we will have 20 'smart' classrooms by August. These classrooms will include SMARTBoards, projectors, document cameras and student response systems. Teachers will be given embedded professional development for the rest of the school year and beyond to assure that the implementation totally supports good instruction and student achievement."

MORE INFO...

www.veterans.fcps.net

Amy McVey, amy.mcvey@fayette.kyschools.us

Changes to KERA hot topic at board meeting

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Possible changes to the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) and the corresponding Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) dominated the February meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education.

The board voted to endorse a position paper developed by the Kentucky Department of Education that outlines strategies for the future of the state's public school assessment and accountability system. The document includes a call for higher, clearer, fewer and narrower academic standards, which will lead to the development of tests that provide valuable data for many stakeholders.

Interim Commissioner Elaine Farris said change is difficult and there are no "sacred cows." However, the Department of Education believes Kentucky must continue to have standards-based assessment, she said.

"It doesn't matter if it's going to be called CATS or rats or cardinals, the state of Kentucky will have an accountability and assessment system because we know it is necessary for ongoing educational progress," Farris said.

Chairman Joe Brothers said the state stated with the KIRIS testing

system, formed CATS in 1998 and adjusted it in 2006.

"There's been an ongoing review of the reform act and the way we assess it, and I believe there is renewed energy in it," he said.

The position paper is designed to provide guidance as the state moves to the next generation of assessment and accountability. Five key principles guided the development of the document, three specifically about state assessment:

- Development of standards must happen before the selection or creation of the assessment. "It is imperative that standards drive the choices made about testing and not vice versa," the paper states.
- The annual state assessment system must provide diagnostic, longitudinal growth data and overall proficiency levels at the individual student level.
- The annual state assessment must measure both the knowledge and higher-level thinking required by the standards. The test must incorporate both multiple-choice questions and constructed response items (short answer, extended answer, open response).
- The annual state assessment should be built to support interim

and classroom assessments.

- Accountability is necessary for ongoing educational improvement. "The fundamental principle of accountability is to motivate students, educators and the public to continually improve Kentucky's educational system. The accountability model should include both academic and nonacademic indicators (graduation, retention, dropout and other rates) and focus on school and student growth," the position paper says.

"It is time to make significant changes to the educational system to ensure that every Kentucky student acquires the skills required in the 21st century to be successful in the global economy," according to the position paper.

The position paper requests that the state take an intense look at curriculum standards, beginning in mathematics and language arts. It calls for work to begin immediately on mathematics standards that could be ready by January 2010 with a mathematics test ready for use by spring 2011. Work in other content areas would get under way for phase-in beginning spring 2012.

The paper indicates that the Kentucky Department of Education, in collaboration with other partners, should invest in professional growth opportunities for teachers who will implement the new standards.

Only after those standards are developed should Kentucky revamp its assessment and accountability system, the paper says. "It's now time for Kentucky to move toward a system that more clearly impacts daily classroom instruction, motivates students for individual success, provides longitudinal measures that give clear feedback to educators and families and also can supply the accountability measures taxpayers deserve and citizens expect," according to the document.

Board member Dorie Combs said, "I believe we have opened the door to some very creative and thoughtful conversations."

The board also heard recommendations for changes to KERA

from superintendents of four of the state's largest districts and a state Department of Education team, who all are participating in the Harvard Executive Education Leadership (ExEL) Project.

Teams from the state Department of Education and Jefferson, Boone, Kenton and Daviess counties school districts received training over the last three years from Harvard University's Colleges of Education, Business and Government on identifying problems, creating theories of action, developing and implementing strategies, and managing and evaluating district- and school-level performance.

Of the lessons learned, the teams cited the importance of building district capacity and its impact on student achievement along with the impact of networking to develop processes that assist in solving common problems of practice.

Following reports from each of the superintendents and the Department of Education team about how they are implementing what they learned, Daviess County Superintendent Tom Shelton presented the cohort's suggestions on "KERA – Phase II."

The first proposal is to focus on high-quality instruction in classrooms. "Teaching has to change. It can't simply be a matter of changing assessment; that's part of it. It can't simply be a matter of changing standards; that's part of it. Instruction has to change," Shelton said.

The second proposal is to restructure the state assessment and accountability system to have a narrower set of standards and a balanced assessment "consisting of formative, interim and summative measures that provide diagnostic data to inform instruction."

The third recommendation is to provide a support structure that allows networking at all levels of education, whether it is within districts, between districts or between districts and the state Department of Education.

The final recommendation was to change the state's funding formula to focus on high-quality instruction. "Our funding system needs to

be focused on what happens in the classroom. ... It has to be restructured to provide those support mechanisms for what happens in the classroom," Shelton said.

In other action, the board:

- agreed to approve the continued removal, by razing, of Lee Hall on the campus of the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the declaration of two additional land parcels on campus as surplus property
- approved revisions to state regulations related to nutrition and health services
- agreed to grant waivers of the March 1 deadline for allocations to school councils until May 1
- agreed to rescind the declaration of emergency for the Covington Independent school district, based on the district's improved financial health
- gave final approval to 702 KAR 7:065, the state regulation related to interscholastic athletics; including changes to the Kentucky High School Athletics Association's constitution, bylaws and tournament rules
- approved district facility plans for Fayette, Lincoln, Mercer, Muhlenberg and Powell counties
- approved local district tax rates levied for Boyd, Green and Martin counties

The board also discussed the criteria for the next commissioner of education. The board will seek candidates who have led large organizations, demonstrate a vision of high-quality education, understand Kentucky's culture and environment, demonstrate a commitment to producing measurable results in low-performing schools and have addressed achievement gap issues.

The board plans to interview search firm candidates on March 5 in Louisville.

The board's next regular meeting will be March 4 at the Kentucky School for the Blind in Louisville.

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=KBOE
www.hbs.edu/pelp/



Photo by Amy Wallot

Study session

Destiny Hatfield studies in the library at Whitley Central Intermediate School (Whitley County).

NELCO gives students leg up on job market

Tom Dekle

Nelson County School District

Firm handshakes and good eye contact were admired and encouraged at Nelson County High School last fall when the real world came knocking.

"First impressions are very important," emphasized Margaret Downs, human resource manager for Constellation Spirits in Bardstown and vice president for Nelson County Training Consortium (NELCO), a Bardstown-based non-profit business group formed to provide training services for area business and industry.

Downs, along with 24 fellow NELCO volunteers, interviewed about 425 Nelson County High sophomores over three days to provide true-to-life experience and advice on the job interview process.

"We try to do this as real as we can," Downs said. "It's pretty impressive the way the kids have reacted to this. Most are a little nervous, but they take the opportunity for a practice interview seriously."

Student "job" interviews through NELCO started last spring with one sophomore English class as part of a segment on career planning, said Nelson County High Counselor David Mudd. That experience turned out to be so beneficial that the idea was expanded in the fall to include all sophomore English classes.

"It is kind of a reality check for (the students)," said Lori Tipton, who teaches English at the high school. "This is mainly real-world experience, something they can take with them."

The curriculum includes a unit on careers, during which students prepare a resume', write cover letters, research careers, learn how to fill out job applications and learn about the job interview process.

Many of the students had never thought about the job process before or what they may do in the future, Tipton said.

"The idea is to prepare kids to leave school and get a job," said Courtney Briney, another English teacher at the high school. "At the start, they're really not ready to do job interviews, but they practice in class and even develop their own interview questions as they learn what an interviewer might ask."

"The learning process is fun, sometimes silly, but I think very beneficial," Briney said.

The NELCO volunteers added a strong dose of reality to the mix.

"When you have (a potential employer) come in and say, 'I will give you a job if you do this, and I will not give you a job if you do that,' it can be a very valuable and memorable lesson," Briney said.

Most students had never experienced that one-on-one with a real audience, Mudd said. Many were nervous, but the interviews were a chance to practice valuable communication skills.

"Ninety-nine percent of the students took it seriously," he said. "I was surprised by the five-year plans, the 10-year plans. So many



Photo by Tom Dekle

Michelle Simpson, right, interviews sophomore Holli Spalding at Nelson County High School. The interviews were conducted as part of an English class segment on the job process. Simpson is a NELCO volunteer who works for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College.

of the students are already thinking long-term."

"I walked away very pleasantly surprised," said Mike Womack, plant manager for NPR Manufacturing Kentucky in Bardstown and a NELCO volunteer interviewer. "Fifteen-year-olds focused on what they want to do in life and already preparing credentials. ... I was thoroughly impressed with these kids."

Downs said the interviewers tried to stress the importance of first impressions, emphasizing such things as the need for firm handshakes and good eye contact.

The students learned what employers are likely to consider inappropriate conduct or dress during an interview.

They learned that too many tattoos and piercings may send the wrong message to a potential employer. They also learned it is a no-no to prop their feet on a desk or answer their cell phones during an interview.

Arriving late, bringing a friend to the interview and text messaging during the interview also are don'ts, students learned.

On the "do" list, along with good eye contact and a smile, Downs suggested that students do a little research on a company and its products, "anything that would make you knowledgeable about the company. You want to get any edge you can get."

Downs said the interviewers also received some surprises during the interviews.

Most of the students expressed an interest in going on to college and most mentioned the medical field as a preferred occupation. "Eighty percent were talking medical field," Downs said. "The most often mentioned

fields were physical therapy and nursing."

Another surprise to the interviewers involved new technology. "(Students) are so into the texting mode," Downs said. "That was really an eye opener for us."

While many young people might consider it a plus to send a quick text message to an interviewer as a follow-up, the opposite is probably closer to the truth, suggested Stan Carton, NELCO executive director and owner of Stan Carton Photography, a Shelbyville photography business.

"They are so used to this texting that e-mails become unreadable because they have no punctuation and contain all sorts of shortcuts and abbreviations," he said. As for the hiring process itself, Carton added that employers use various methods, including the interview, to try and determine who will be a good employee. "They are trying to remove as much of the guesswork as possible."

"It's not complicated," he said. "For entry-level positions, most employers are looking for a very basic person — someone they can train and someone who is reliable."

"They are looking for dependability; some degree of commitment to the company; the practice of good hygiene; someone who will dress appropriately. They're looking for a work ethic; someone who will take and follow directions; and who will respect their leaders," he said. "I don't think there are any major secrets."

MORE INFO...

Stan Carton, (502) 232-0478

Margaret Downs (502) 348-3991, ext. 248

Other Career Preparation Activities

- The Hopkins County school district offers "Creating Futures," a career fair for students with a wide range of disabilities. The goal is to help these students successfully enter the workforce and to transition into adult life. The district also sponsors "Career Connections," which is geared toward 8th-grade students. The program teaches about the 14 Kentucky Career Clusters and what jobs fall within each of these.
- HOT Expo (Health Occupations Today) is a health career fair that is organized and sponsored by Southern Kentucky Area Health Education Center for high school juniors and seniors. The event features more than 80 exhibitors and nearly 200 representatives from various health-related businesses. More than 1,500 students participate from approximately 40 schools.
- Schools with student-run banks ask local bank sponsors to interview students for positions within the school bank. The students prepare for the professional interview as if they were attempting to get the job at the sponsoring bank. Schools that participate in this program include Meade County, Bullitt Central, Muhlenberg South and Boyle County high schools.

LaBarbara learning, leading through U.S.-Japan program

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Heather LaBarbara isn't sure how Japan's role in World War II — including the bombings of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima — is taught in Japanese classrooms.

This summer, however, she is likely to find out.

"It's something I hope to learn more about when I visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum," said LaBarbara, a middle school language arts teacher at West Jessamine Middle School (Jessamine County). "I, too, would love to see how Japan teaches this portion of history to its people. I do know that it is addressed in the books that Japanese students read about history."

LaBarbara is one of only 20 young American leaders chosen to participate in the U.S.-Japan Leadership Program (USJLP), created by Scott Oki, one of the founding members of the Microsoft Corporation. LaBarbara's stint in the program lasts two years, and this is the second year for her. In 2008, the American and Japanese delegates participated in a conference in Seattle. This summer, both groups will meet in Japan, visiting Kyoto, Hiroshima and Tokyo.

According to LaBarbara, the program develops a network of communication, friendship and understanding among the next generation of leaders in each of the two countries.

"USJLP aims to foster a continuing dialogue among younger leaders in a broad variety of professions," said LaBarbara, the lone teacher in the program and the first Kentuckian ever to participate. "It's a bit weird to be the only educator in a room filled with diplomats, government leaders and scientists."

Jacque Van Houten, Kentucky Department of Education World Language and International Education consultant, added that the program is known for raising money used for grants and is ideal for teachers who want to enhance their classroom teaching.

"I can see this program having a great impact on the internationalization of the teacher's perspective and classroom content," Van Houten said. "The educator who is a participant will have a wonderful network upon which to draw for a variety of

resources. It will certainly broaden the scope of any educator involved, not only in terms of global involvement, but also in knowledge of other areas of interest and study."

Having the support of a school district is paramount when participating in programs such as USJLP, according to Van Houten.

"The Jessamine County school district is known for its support of innovation and allowing teachers to explore and develop their talents and knowledge," Van Houten said. "The school district is also a big supporter of international education, hosting visiting teachers from Spain and two guest teachers from China."

"It involves a lifelong commitment," Van Houten added of LaBarbara's participation in the program. "It makes the participant an informal American ambassador, and it will provide participants with a new view of the world."

Last summer at the Seattle conference, LaBarbara led a panel discussing education in both America and Japan.

"It was an eye-opening experience for Japanese participants because they were unaware that education was so underfunded in the U.S. and that this funding was

decided by both the federal government and state government," LaBarbara said. "They were especially shocked to learn that curriculum was so strict in order to teach for No Child Left Behind requirements. Also, I learned how special-needs students were educated and what a normal school day looked like for Japanese students."

LaBarbara has taken what she's learned through this experience and is applying it into her classroom at West Jessamine Middle.

"My students are very curious about Japan," LaBarbara said. "I have been working information about Japan into my literacy curriculum at every opportunity I can. ... I want my students to be more familiar with the history, culture and society of Japan. The social customs, philosophies and artistic expressions of Japan have had a huge influence over the world. Students need to be made aware that there is a larger world out there outside their own."

She has big plans in store for her classrooms thanks to what she's learned through the U.S.-Japan Leadership program.

"Students seem to have a thirst to learn more about anything that is different from

them. I think this is a good thing. I search for meaningful ways to bring in speakers who can answer questions for students that I don't know the answer to, and they always want to know more about the teenagers of Japan."

"Currently, I am applying for a \$15,000 grant through the U.S.-Japan Leadership Foundation to buy books that will be incorporated into my classroom along with computers and Web cams so students can have real time book chats and discussions with other classes in Japan," she added. "Students in Japan will read an American novel that my students choose; we hope it will be *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. Then we will be reading a novel chosen by our Japanese counterparts. These are the types of educational strategies I would never have thought to use until participating in this program."

LaBarbara feels it is important to make her students aware of the similarities between Japanese and American students.

"I talk with students about how although people may look different, have different customs or have different religious beliefs, they are very much the same as everyone else," LaBarbara said. "Although Nicholasville is a long way from Japan, the people of both areas care about their families, love their pets, want the world to be a better place and want to be accepted by others."

"I also want students to learn that they should try new experiences even if they don't think they will like them," she added. "They should give everything a chance, at least once, and they might be surprised to learn they just might like it. This trip (to Japan this summer) will be the first time I have ever been out of the country. It will be the first time for me to eat sushi three meals a day. ... Instead of being scared of it, I embrace it, and I am using it as a means to learn more about the strength within myself. I encourage my students to do the same when these opportunities present themselves in the future."

MORE INFO...

www.usjlp.org

Heather LaBarbara, heather.labarbara@jessamine.kyschools.us



Photo by Amy Wallot

Language arts teacher Heather LaBarbara has students comparing and contrasting the English version of "Cinderella" to the Japanese story "Lily and the Wooden Bowl" at West Jessamine Middle School (Jessamine County).

Program 'busts' myth about mathematics

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Principal Alan Sweet has been at Whitley Central Intermediate School (Whitley County) for four years, and he has seen 5th graders learning the same mathematics that high school freshmen were learning 20 or 25 years ago.

That makes it very hard for some parents to help their children with their homework, he said.

"A lot of parents, due to their age difference, were exposed to much different curriculums. It's not that they can't do it; it's just they never were exposed to it," Sweet said. "I have heard a lot of parents say, 'I would gladly help my child if I knew how to, but it's getting to where it's over my head.' That's why we wanted to involve the parents and teach the parents the topic as well."

So in the fall, the school began a pilot program offering mathematics help to students and their parents. Every Monday, one teacher at the 3rd- through 6th-grade levels reviews what students learned the previous week and goes over what they will learn that week, previewing lessons and answering questions for both students and adults.

Title I Director Paula Trickett said Whitley County Superintendent Lonnie Anderson challenged her to improve the district's performance in mathematics. Trickett, a former mathematics teacher at Whitley County High School, had the idea to work with students and parents to teach the adults to better help the children with their homework.

"I knew that one of the problems that we had was that when kids had homework, their parents, in a lot of cases, aren't equipped to help them with their homework," she said. "That was a real struggle for them."

She turned to Sweet and District Math Specialist Kim Creekmore, both former colleagues and mathematics teachers at the high school,

to develop the specifics.

"I thought it was a good way to get the parents involved in the school and in our curriculum and help with the math," Creekmore said. "I think our students really enjoyed having their parents come in and receive that help so that they could help them at home."

Whitley County has seven elementary schools, and Trickett thought the intermediate school was the obvious choice because of Sweet's background.

"He actually spends a lot of time going into classrooms here and teaching math lessons," she said.

Sweet said the first two-hour Math Busters program, a name voted on by students, was in September. By mid-October the program was running smoothly, she said. Students receive a snack and can check a bulletin board to see which teacher for their grade level is working and in which room. Different students are encouraged to attend because all the teachers in a grade rotate working Math Busters.

"They're actually getting it before the other kids that don't show up do, so they'll actually know what's coming," he said.

Teachers rotate who works at Math Busters each week. Teachers for each grade develop their mathematics agenda a week in advance, and then Sweet and Creekmore review it.

Third-grade teacher Susan Brashear said having plans and supplies ready so early helps her tie more concepts together to make the lessons more valuable to students.

"I think the students are beginning to be able to recognize those connections earlier in the lessons," she said.

Jeannie Broyles, a 5th-grade teacher, has seen that benefit as well.

"This works well because parents and students can have a preview and know what to expect as well as make plans to attend a particular session they may be having



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fifth-grade teacher Jeannie Broyles helps Erinn Sweet and Tanner Bryant with their geoboards during Math Busters at Whitley Central Intermediate School (Whitley County). Math Busters is an after-school program for grades 3-6 that focuses on mathematics. Parents are encouraged to participate.

difficulty with," she said.

And rather than just going over homework and solving problems, teachers try to make it fun, Sweet said. For instance, students had been struggling with measurement on the state assessment, so teachers set up a Math Olympics. In one event, students shot-put a cotton ball and measured the distance in meters.

"It was interesting to see how many kids didn't understand the idea of a meter or a liter, stuff like that, because they're not used to dealing with metric measurements on an everyday basis," Sweet said. "We try to make it fun rather than just straight out of a textbook."

He said up to 20 students and 18 adults usually attend.

"Parents are very impressed with the program, and they're greatly appreciative of our local board of education for sponsoring the program. The parents frequently say that the curriculum has changed drastically since they were in grade school," Sweet said.

Brashear said she has had many favorable responses from parents and students about the program.

"Parents tell me the math their children are learning today is so different from the math they had

when they were in school. Many parents were not aware of the strategies and techniques we use when teaching math today, so I think this program has also helped to foster confidence in parents, allowing them to better provide support the students need at home," she said. "It's difficult for a mom or a dad to help their kid with homework if mom or dad can't do the homework him/herself. Math Busters is a tutoring session for parents and students. We teach the parents the way we teach math."

Broyles said many of the students who attend regularly have shown improvement both in class and on tests.

"I also see an increase in their confidence and a true eagerness when attempting to solve problems," she said. "Many of these students were intimidated or afraid of failing in front of others. The atmosphere of Math Busters allows and encourages students to ask questions or speak up when they have a question or a different approach to solving a problem."

Trickett said she would like to be able to expand the program, but funding is limited. The district pays for Math Busters with Title I money.

"I think we're very pleased with the outcome and certainly we see value in trying to do this in every school," she said.

Seeing parents and students work together in Math Buster sessions has replenished Broyles' enthusiasm and love of teaching, she said.

"The smiles and interaction during these sessions is contagious, and I leave with a sense of accomplishment for both the students and myself," Broyles said. "I have been in several sessions where students have commented 'I wish Math Busters could last longer!' This is what we set out to do from the beginning: foster a love of math in our students and help them gain the skills they needed to be successful problem solvers in today's classroom and tomorrow's world."

MORE INFO...

<http://s88344620.onlinehome.us/drupaled/>

Alan Sweet, alan.sweet@whitley.kyschools.us, (606) 549-8011

Paula Trickett, paula.trickett@whitley.kyschools.us, (606) 549-7000

Kim Creekmore, kim.creekmore@whitley.kyschools.us, (606) 549-7001

Elswick turns technology 'survival' into success

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Vickie Elswick loves technology, but the educator of 32 years said her interest in it was fostered through her need for "survival."

Elswick, who has spent her entire career in the Boyd County school district, has done more than survive; she's thrived. This is due large in part to her ability to blend her love of education with a unique understanding of an always-changing field and a creative approach to providing funding necessary to keep up with the latest advances in technology.

"My interest in technology came with the realization that I would very quickly become obsolete in my field if I didn't embrace technology," said Elswick. "My first job found me teaching typing with manual typewriters, and I moved from there to electric typewriters."

Since that time, Elswick has continued teaching, using every platform from DOS to Vista to Macs. "I have never stopped re-learning my craft," said the Boyd County Middle School technology coordinator.

Elswick's efforts were recognized recently when she finished as runner-up in *Technology and Learning Magazine's* 2007 Technology Leader of the Year competition. Elswick, who also teaches touch keyboarding and exploratory computer applications at Boyd County Middle, was the only Kentucky educator to be nominated.

"She is the consummate teacher," Boyd County Middle Principal Bill Boblett said. "By teaching students responsible technology skills, Vickie instructs her students to the fullest with regard to responsible technology use. Vickie's students are always prepared to tackle almost every aspect related to technology."

Boblett said Elswick also excels in teaching the staff as well as the students.

"She has been responsible for all the training and professional development dealing with technology at Boyd County Middle," Boblett said. "Vickie trains our

staff on using our new SMART Boards, Infinite Campus products and many other programs.

"She sets up computers, monitors the two computer labs, assists teachers in developing lesson plans involving technology, assists students in meeting their needs and sponsors the school technology club."

Though a lot of her job involves sitting in front of a computer daily, Elswick also appreciates the value of learning from other teachers and applying their best traits into her job.

"I work alongside some incredible teachers. Those that I have admired the most are those who put their heads down and worked. They love what they do, and no matter what, they make sure their students get the best they can possibly give them," Elswick said. "To meet the needs of those students, you have to work incredibly hard, and you have to put in a lot of hours. You must embrace change, and you must be very self-motivated. There aren't many people waiting to pat you on the back, but then none of the good teachers I have known went into teaching for the visible rewards. They went into education to prepare their students to get the accolades."

Elswick appreciates the variety in her work.

"You plan instruction, deliver it, and you assess what you've done, but that is such an oversimplification," she said. "Teaching provides you so many opportunities to be creative and innovative, and not all careers do that."

"The best thing about my job with technology is that it's always changing," Elswick added. "You never get bored because there is always something new. It allows you to be creative, and it has incredibly positive effects on my students. They are so interested and motivated when using technology. The quality of their work is frequently so much higher because technology has given them the right tools."

This is especially critical at the



Photo by Amy Wallot

Vickie Elswick helps 7th-grade student Karen Green with the art program Kid Pix during her Exploratory Computer Applications class at Boyd County Middle School. Elswick has spent her entire teaching career in Boyd County.

middle-school level, Elswick is quick to point out.

"Technology engages students in their own education," Elswick said. "Middle school is such a crucial time in the process — I actually view it as the make-or-break time in a child's education. Technology may not be the answer to all the problems educators face, but I think it certainly provides us with our best single source of assistance. It can help equalize the playing field for students with disabilities. If they can't spell, it provides them with a spellchecker. If they can't write legibly, a keyboard compensates. If the student is gifted, it provides countless enrichment opportunities for independent learning. Students who consider themselves average find that technology helps take their work to the next level."

But for students — or school districts as a whole for that matter

— to accomplish that funding for technology is key.

"Money has always been tight for technology," Elswick said. "That isn't a result of recent budget cutbacks. We have always been provided with the basics — computers, printers and integrated software packages for our students. However, my budget allocation for this year was \$100, and one printer cartridge costs double that. If I wanted a desktop publishing program or a digital camera, I've had to get creative to secure funding for them."

"I have been fortunate in that I do receive a small amount of vocational funds, and that has helped me purchase some of the software and hardware I've needed," she added. "I have secured donations from businesses and written grants."

Elswick added that her most exciting venture to secure money

happened a few years back when she entered the Samsung Hope for Education essay contest. She was a first-place winner, and Boyd County Middle received \$20,000 worth of technology, including several flat screen televisions for every team and the library.

"I will have to say, however, that money is sometimes over-emphasized with technology," Elswick said. "Don't get me wrong, I get excited about the possibilities afforded me with every new technology tool. However, you can do amazing things with just the basics, and I think sometimes (especially in these tough economic times) we need to place more emphasis on fully and creatively utilizing what we have than on finding the next big thing."

MORE INFO...

Vickie Elswick, vickie.elswick@boyd.kyschools.us, (606) 928-9547

Two Kentucky teachers win thousands for schools

Teachers in Muhlenberg and Lincoln counties have won more than \$120,000-worth of technology for their elementary schools in the 2008 Samsung Hope for Education essay contest.

Kim House of Greenville Elementary School (Muhlenberg County) and Kathy Myers of Waynesburg Elementary School (Lincoln County) were among the 30 first-place winners from across the country. The fifth annual contest awards schools from across the country more than \$60,000 each in technology, software, cash grants and educational television programming packages.

House teaches mathematics and science to 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at Greenville Elementary. Myers teaches 4th- and 5th-grade language arts at Waynesburg Elementary. St. Thomas School, a private school in Fort Thomas, also won first-place honors in the contest.

Students, parents, teachers and principals submitted thousands of essays looking for their schools to benefit from this unique pro-

gram. This year's essay question addressed the environment, asking entrants, "How has technology educated you on helping the environment and how or why has it changed your behavior to be more environmentally friendly?" The first-prize schools will receive technology from Samsung including its award-winning LCD high-definition televisions, laptops, multi-function products, smart phones, digital camcorders and cameras, blu-ray players, LCD computer monitors, and color printers, as well as Microsoft's latest software.

The program's newest partner, DIRECTV, will provide cash grants and the SCHOOL CHOICE educational television programming package. The person who submitted a winning entry on behalf of each of the 31 winning schools will be awarded the Samsung Ultra Mobile PC, a handheld multi-media PC.

"With programs like Hope for Education, we have the opportunity to help bridge the technol-

ogy gap that many of our schools face," said D.J. Oh, president and CEO, Samsung Electronics America. "It will allow students to reach new frontiers via the Internet and through the software, cash grants and educational television programming packages that Microsoft and DIRECTV will be providing. In addition, the classroom assistance dog will support the students who need it most."

Samsung's Hope for Education contest was first announced in 2004 at the opening of the Samsung Experience, a unique and creative technology emporium in the Time Warner Center in New York City. Since the original launch, more than 280 U.S. schools in 43 states have benefited from more than \$9 million in technology, software, cash grants and educational television programming package.

MORE INFO...

<http://pages.samsung.com/us/hopeforeducation/about.html>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Wishful writing

Teacher assistant Lyndy Sparkman helps kindergarten student Ivery Simmons with a writing assignment in Kim Walker's class at Veterans Park Elementary School (Fayette County). It was the 100th day of school and students were writing what they would do with \$100. See page 4 for more information.

'Lincoln: The Kentucky Years' available to Kentucky schools



2009 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. To help students celebrate and learn about this great American president — and native Kentuckian — KET is providing each Kentucky public school copies of a special DVD, "Lincoln: The Kentucky Years."

This 14-minute film focuses on Lincoln's early years in Kentucky as well as the impact of Kentucky on his personality, values and accomplishments. It was created from the KET documentary "Lincoln: I, too, am a Kentuckian" and is being distributed to Kentucky schools thanks to a grant from the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) and the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

MORE INFO...

www.ket.org/lincoln
Teresa Day, (859) 258-7294,
tday@ket.org

Kentucky receives high marks for school breakfast

Kentucky has one of the highest participation rates in the nation for schoolchildren who eat both lunch and breakfast at school, according to an annual report by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

In the 2008 School Breakfast Scorecard, Kentucky ranks fifth nationwide in the percentage of low-income students who eat both breakfast and lunch at school. For the 2007-08 school year, 57 percent of Kentucky students who ate lunch also ate breakfast at school. Only New Mexico (62.9 percent), South Carolina (60.2 percent), West Virginia (57.4 percent) and Oklahoma (57.2 percent) had higher rates of participation. Nationwide, 45.9 percent of students who eat school

lunch also eat school breakfast.

New Mexico provides state funding for universal school breakfast; South Carolina and West Virginia mandate that school breakfast be offered in all schools. Oklahoma has no state requirements related to school breakfast.

Kentucky does not provide additional funding or mandate that schools provide school breakfast, although it is encouraged. State law (KRS 157.065) requires that schools that do not serve breakfast report the reasons why and any problems that inhibit participation to the Kentucky Department of Education. Another state law (KRS 158.070) requires that school districts arrange bus schedules so that children arrive in sufficient time to

participate in breakfast prior to the start of the instructional day.

Only about five Kentucky public schools do not offer school breakfast, primarily because of a lack of interest by students.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), based in Washington, D.C., is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC works with hundreds of national, state and local nonprofit organizations, public agencies and corporations to address hunger and its root cause, poverty.

MORE INFO...

www.frac.org

Kentucky at forefront of teacher leadership

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Teachers in Kentucky can now get a master's degree that enhances their roles as teachers rather than future administrators.

Beginning in October 2008, Asbury College began offering a master of arts degree in education resulting in a Teacher as Leader endorsement. Linda France, coordinator of Educational Leadership at Asbury, said the entire 30-hour, two-year program was designed from a specialized teacher as leader curriculum.

"Every course is geared toward instructional leadership focused on what the teacher as a leader needs to know and be able to do," she said. "We want teachers working inside and outside the classroom to strengthen their professional skills and the skills of colleagues. That, in turn, strengthens the culture in the schools and improves the quality of everyday teaching and learning."

Since 2001, Kentucky has been studying school leadership through the Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System (KyCLS).

"Our goal is that we want high-quality instruction in every classroom every day for every child, and our work is focused on the instructional leadership of principals and district leadership teams," said Debbie Daniels, the KyCLS state director.

Educators in Kentucky and across the nation began discussing the philosophy of expanding leadership beyond a principal to a leadership team to focus on learning in schools. As part of that, teachers needed to be able to give principals feedback about what should happen to improve a school.

Educational leaders from Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Alabama and Kansas (KODAK) found they all had an interest in teacher leadership and developed a consortium whose goal was to develop a 14-course program that identified curriculum-, class- and field-based experiences to develop teacher leaders, Daniels said.

Daniels, a consultant in the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Leadership and School Improvement, said hundreds of Kentucky teachers are receiving principal certification as a pathway to rank change and completion of a master's degree, but never



Photo by Amy Wallot

Southside Elementary School (Woodford County) Principal Michelle Cassidy, left, 1st-grade teachers Yvonne Crank, back left, and Kim Reeves, right, talk with Linda France, front right, about their next meeting.

intend to move into administration.

"One of the things we wanted to make very clear in our five-state consortium development of teacher leadership curriculum is that it is not a stepping stone to a principalship or to be an administrator," she said. "It is for teachers who want to become teacher leaders, and we hope that it will help the colleges and universities applying for master's programs in their redesign and development."

Kentucky's Education Professional Standards Board recently required all colleges and universities to redesign master's degree programs to include programs based on a teacher as leader endorsement, Daniels said.

France said schools are realizing that it will take a lot of expertise to come together as learning communities to discuss what works and what needs to change, conduct action research and measure progress daily to reach the high goals that are essential to prepare students for success.

"This can best be done at the classroom level," she said. "We really want teachers to know that they have tremendous expertise to

improve student learning. And we want the spotlight to shine on the contributions teachers bring to the school-improvement process."

Principals need an expanded leadership team, France said.

"It moves beyond the policy-setting area into the curriculum, instruction and assessment areas where the teacher's expertise is just critical in terms of addressing the learning needs of students, setting goals for improvement, evaluating progress along the way and working with the principal to improve student achievement."

Daniels agreed.

"The more teachers who have this kind of experience and expertise, the more support we have in schools. Whether it is with helping teachers design instructional units, analyzing their student data or modeling best practice, all of the support informs what and how teachers teach and students learn," she said. "So, the more focus we have on teacher leadership, the more capacity we can build, the better our schools, the higher the quality of instruction and the greater gains in student achievement."

KyCLS and the Kentucky Leadership Academy (KLA) partnered with Asbury to develop its teacher as leader master's program, Daniels said.

"It's an example of a whole-village effort to develop partnerships and work together to make sure that we're all sending the

same message and working collaboratively to train and support aspiring teacher leaders," she said.

KLA is made up of six cadres across the state and provides curriculum and training four times per year, as well as sponsoring national and international speakers throughout the year to strengthen its efforts. Its goal is to provide training and resources where leaders can participate and embed professional development at school and district levels, according to KLA Director Shirley LaFavers.

As part of its partnership with the Kentucky Leadership Academy, Asbury is offering a class called "Leading by Design," focusing on how to work with small professional learning communities. Students will be able to participate when KLA hosts Becky and Richard DuFour, experts on creating and sustaining small learning communities.

Asbury also is teaming with leaders in individual districts. For instance, Jessamine County School District's instructional supervisor and director of curriculum will work with students for the class "Curriculum Design" about curriculum alignment.

"It goes beyond the textbook. It goes beyond the classroom. It's a dynamic learning environment," France said.

One of the courses is a curriculum class taught online through Harvard University. France has taken the course, and "it's one of the most exciting learning opportunities I have experienced in a long time."

Another unique feature is field study. France wants students to take what they learn back to their schools. Then she will join them in the field as they implement their learning in their schools.

"We want everything they learn in this course of study to be relevant in the context of their own setting," she said.

The first cadre has eight students, France said. Ideally she would like to have 25 students moving through the program together each year.

"That may take two or three years to get there, but I think we will see a significant increase in enrollment in year two," she said.

MORE INFO...

www.asbury.edu/graduate/education/options/tle

Linda France, (859) 858-3511, www.asbury.edu/graduate/education/faculty/LindaP-France

Debbie Daniels, (502) 564-4201, debbie.daniels@education.ky.gov

Kentucky proposed five standards for teacher leaders. The standards are:

- leading school improvement
- promoting ongoing professional learning for staff and others
- deepening the instructional capacity of colleagues
- working productively with others
- developing communities of professional practice

National Board certification daunting, rewarding

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Third-grade teacher Misty Dozier didn't achieve certification the first time she applied to be a National Board Certified Teacher. Ultimately, however, she said that benefited her students at the Frakes School Center (Bell County).

"I learned how to implement instruction based on individual needs. I now know differentiating instruction is a necessity in the classroom because we have such a wide range of diverse learners," she said. "This process also helped me to help my students see the connection of different subjects. For example, in my 3rd-grade classroom, we had set times for different subjects, but now we do many different subjects within a class period. For example, on any given day, you might walk in to find us making bar graphs in science or writing a narrative in social studies class. Overall, it's about the students and making your instruction fit their needs."

Dozier was one of 230 Kentucky teachers achieving National Board Certification in 2008, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Board certification process requires intense self-reflection and analysis of a teacher's own practice. That self-examination includes a three-hour written test, two videotapes demonstrating classroom teaching

skills and a portfolio that includes descriptions of a candidate's school and community involvement, sample lesson plans and analysis of their students' work.

"I believe that one truly learns so much from the National Board process. With that said, I believe that the first time around was a learning experience, so the second time around I constantly self-assessed my teaching practices and revisited my first portfolio entries (to see what it was that I could have done)," Dozier said. "I also looked at the National Board Standards more closely and made for sure that my teaching practices included those standards."

Dozier is not unusual by failing in her first attempt at National Board certification, according to Marcie Lowe, executive staff adviser with Kentucky's Education Professional Standards Board.

About 50 percent of applicants fail on their first attempt, Lowe said. But there is no shame in that because the application process is so intense, she said. The assessment measures applicants against the most rigorous standards in the profession and allows them to show the effect they have had on student achievement and outcomes.

"It's the most rigorous of all processes for educators, it's the pinnacle of recognitions for teachers and it requires intense self-reflection of your own practice," Lowe said.

Dozier, who has taught for six years, said being a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) has been a personal goal since college.

"It is the highest teaching standard one can acquire, and it is a process that really requires that you do your job well; therefore, I knew if I passed this process, I was doing a good job in my profession," she said.

In Kentucky, a teacher is eligible to receive his or her Rank I classification when passing National Board certification, she said.

"The out-of-pocket expense was more affordable than if I had gone back to college to get my rank," she said.

That is not an uncommon reason, according to Lowe.

"Many educators believe that



Photo by Amy Wallot

National Board Certified Teacher Amber McClellan helps 4th-grade student Hiroto Maruyama find common factors during Anessa Scott's class at Garden Springs Elementary School (Fayette County). Maruyama's native language is Japanese.

this is a more meaningful way for them to achieve that rank change because it allows them to specialize in an area," she said. "National Board Certification allows the best of the best to show that they can impact student achievement."

NBCTs also are eligible for a \$2,000 salary supplement for the life of a certificate (it must be renewed after 10 years) and if they are employed or mentoring in their certificate area for at least 50 percent of the time.

Dozier said she specialized in middle childhood "mainly because of my students' ages.... I had to decide between early childhood and middle childhood, and after thinking about the two age groups, I decided upon middle childhood."

Amber McClellan, mathematics specialist at Garden Springs Elementary (Fayette County) holds the distinction of being the only Kentucky teacher in her specialty (English as a New Language/Early and Middle Childhood). She received her National Board Certification in 2007 on her second attempt.

"I worked previously as an ELL (English Language Learner) teacher and absolutely adored that position and found it extremely rewarding," she said. "I researched and found that not many people were certified in this area, and I thought that it would make a valuable asset to my resume if I ever moved out of state

and had to search for a new teaching position."

Successful Kentucky candidates also may receive up to 75 percent fee reimbursement and, as funding allows, reimbursement to districts for substitute teaching and up to \$400 for application costs.

There are things candidates can do to help their chances of success. Lowe said candidates can receive mentors if they choose.

"Having that mentor can be a big asset simply because you're dealing with someone who's a National Board Certified Teacher who's been there," she said.

Jump Start seminars also help teachers focus on documenting their accomplishments, the types of writing needed for the portfolio, how to prepare for the assessment and getting organized, Lowe said.

"That's basically to help them build their confidence in approaching the National Board process," she said.

Candidates should expect to put in about 400 hours in seven to nine months, Lowe said.

"It's a very rigorous measure of development and assessment of the teacher's knowledge and skills," she said. "And it shows that those skills and abilities are imbedded in classroom practice."

McClellan said she found the portfolio process to be the more rigorous and demanding part of

the certification process.

"While the test was demanding, it only lasted a few hours, whereas the portfolio took so much time to complete. I had about nine months to work on the four portfolio entries. Much of my energy was spent making sure my entries would follow the guidelines and standards," she said. "One must also take considerable time planning the lessons that will be videotaped, as well as preparing the electronic equipment and permission slips for videotaping. I remember spending about 20 hours spread out over a week or two writing the documented accomplishments section of the portfolio. In order to complete that section, I also had to gather evidence of the accomplishments I wrote about in the form of pictures, letters and other artifacts."

National Board Teachers have proven they know the subjects and demonstrated the skill to manage and monitor student learning, Lowe said.

"Research is solid in the benefits that a National Board Certified Teacher makes in the classroom," she said.

Dozier said she would recommend other teachers go through the National Board certification process.

"I would have to tell potential candidates that it is a difficult journey; one must be very dedicated," she said. "Also, it is a process that makes you self-assess yourself over and over again. You and your students will learn so much. There will be days when you feel overwhelmed, but do not give up. It will be worth it when you see the words, 'Congratulations, you are a Nationally Board Certified Teacher.'"

MORE INFO...

www.nbpts.org
www.kyepsb.net/certification/nationalboard.asp

Teresa Moore, Education Professional Standards Board, teresam.moore@ky.gov, (502) 564-4606

Misty Dozier, misty.dozier@bell.kyschools.us, (606) 337-2921

Amber McClellan, amber.mcclellan@fayette.kyschools.us, (859) 381-3388

The state's top five school districts* in terms of the cumulative total of NBCTs are:

- Jefferson County (97)
- Oldham County (96)
- Fayette County (85)
- Kenton County (52)
- Hardin County (50)

* as reported by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

To be eligible, candidates must have:

- a bachelor's degree
- three years' experience
- a valid teaching license

www.nbpts.org/userfiles/File/Guide_2009_web.pdf

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Education at bat: Seven principles for educators

When Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor David Perkins looked back at his childhood Little League experience, he found the perfect metaphor for the teaching concepts he presents in his new book, *Making Learning Whole: How Seven Principles of Teaching Can Transform Education*.

Asked in a recent interview to describe how he would like educators to work with his ideas, Perkins said, "They should get a rough sense of the ideas and start using them. ... They needn't read the whole book — they can just start with the first chapter." *Making Learning Whole*, he says, "is a spiral process that frontloads action and then loops back to reflection and more learning — which is what the core principles recommend for learning anywhere."

Seven Principles of Teaching

Why think about Little League? Perkins argues that in baseball one learns what it is to play the whole game first and then fine-tune aspects of it over time. To elaborate on this concept of "learning by wholes," Perkins details practical principles.

1. Play the whole game.

Perkins sees two unfortunate tendencies in education: One is what he calls "elementitis" — learning the components of a subject without ever putting them together. The other is the tendency to foster "learning about" something at the expense of actually learning it. "You don't learn to play baseball by a year of batting practice," he noted, but in learning mathematics, for instance, students are all too often presented with prescribed problems with only one right solution and no clear indication how they connect with the real world.

The way to let young learners play the whole game is to find or construct a junior version of it.

In teaching mathematics, drilling children in multiplication or even giving them "word problems" is likely to lapse into "elementitis." But giving a child some money and asking her to calculate whether it's enough to buy the items in her shopping basket is a "junior version" of the way mathematical skills are used in the real world.

2. Make the game worth playing.

Perkins cites research showing that intrinsic motivation for learning academic subjects falls steadily from 3rd to 8th grade. However, students will want to learn about things

that they think have value and relevance in their lives, and Perkins suggests that teachers use "generative topics" — rich, engaging topics that encompass a wide scope — to make learning worthwhile for students. For example, a generative topic that could interest students might include a series of questions — "What is a living thing? Are viruses alive? What about computer viruses?" — and would help foster discussions that create conceptual knowledge.

3. Work on the hard parts.

Again Perkins draws on personal experience for a metaphor. He observed that, for all their years of playing bridge, his parents really weren't getting better at it over time. He realized that they played for reasons of sociability, not competition. But if they had been trying to get better, they would have needed "deliberate practice." In Perkins' view, a learner needs both a sense of the whole game and a focus on specific trouble spots.

4. Play out of town.

Perkins refers to the transfer of knowledge from one context to another. Some information transfers are more easily made than others. For example, once you know how to drive a car, you are easily able to transfer that knowledge to driving a truck, but it is much more of a stretch to relate the Civil War to the current tensions in Iraq. These examples illustrate the distinction between "near transfer" (car/truck) and "far transfer" (Civil War/Iraq). Educators can look for transfer to assess whether or not students thoroughly understand the topic they have been taught.

4. Play the hidden game.

In baseball, algebra or anything else we learn, there are richer, more layered aspects than show up on the surface.

Perkins suggests two questions to help children learn to uncover the hidden game and do interpretative analysis: "What do you see going on? What do you see that makes you think so?" These questions can spark discussion about a work of art, but also about a scientific demonstration, a political speech or any of a number of other kinds of presentations and can draw "learners into the game of inquiry."

5. Learn from the team.

Perkins points out that the ethos of "Keep your eyes on your own paper!" is deeply ingrained in schools, even though they are natural centers of group learning. Perkins notes the importance of social learning, and



Photo by Amy Wallot

Promoting education globally

Kentucky Leadership Academy (KLA) facilitator Larry Allen, far left, Shelby County East Middle School teacher Sherry Curtsinger, left, Powell County Superintendent Evelyn Neely, center, and Kentucky Department of Education consultant Darryl Thompson pitch in as the KLA's Bluegrass/Cumberland cadre collected tote bags and school supplies to send to impoverished areas in Africa during its January meeting. KLA's recent International Leadership Summit focused on connecting with schools in other parts of the world in order to learn from each other and also promote humanitarian efforts globally.

he urges students to learn from teammates and from other "teams" — other students in different roles.

6. Learn the game of learning.

Perkins suggests that teachers allow students to be in charge of their own learning.

Perkins cites a school that, in this era of high-stakes testing, has emphasized diagnostic testing as a tool for individual students to understand their progress and determine what to focus on next. "What particularly struck me," Perkins writes, was that with a little help "the students, not the teachers, took stock of their own progress. The tests were framed emphatically as tools to provide information, not appraisals of worth."

7. Putting it all together

To implement these ideas in the classroom, Perkins suggests that educators start with a junior version of the seven principles — picking and choosing what's most right for their own classrooms, while paying particular attention to "playing the whole game" and "making the game worth playing." If educators use these principles, Perkins hopes, they will improve their students' understanding of the game, and their ability to play it successfully.

From the Kentucky Department of Education

Kentucky Education Facts is a compilation of commonly requested information items from the state level. Examples include enrollment, teacher salaries, technology information, school finance and more.

A recently updated version of Kentucky Education Facts is available on the Kentucky Department of Education Web site. It includes links to data sources.

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=KEF

Talk to Us!

Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov

Phone: (502) 564-2000

Fax: (502) 564-3049

Write: Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

Science literacy

The proposed Science Literacy Project for Middle School Teachers will present teachers opportunities to learn content related to current issues in life, earth and environmental sciences. In addition they'll learn 21st century literacy skills alongside faculty and staff from the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville. The target population for this project includes 10 teams composed of two middle school teachers from the content areas of science and English/language arts. The program involves:

- a two-day summer professional development and planning workshop for teachers to learn new, Internet-based literacy strategies contextualized in current science issues using a train-the-trainer model
- a year-long series of science-literacy seminars for teachers and administrators lead by UK and U of L staff and faculty
- long-term, job-embedded professional development for teachers, including visits to schools, online professional connections and assignments, and school-based mentoring facilitated by UK and U of L staff and faculty
- school-based professional development provided by teams of teachers trained during the summer workshop
- development and sharing of standards-based units of study in the life, Earth and environmental sciences

For more information, contact Carol D. Hanley (859) 333-8248.

'Evolution: Biology Defined'

The University of Kentucky is holding the second lecture in its new series, "Evolution: Biology Defined," on March 5 from 6-8 p.m. EST. The topic is evolution and the teaching of evolution. All teachers and students are invited. RSVP requested to Stephanie Shrewsbury, stephanie.shrewsbury@uky.edu. For more information, contact the Tracy Farmer Center at (859) 257-3780.

'Environment, Society, and Culture of Ecuador'

Eastern Illinois University is accepting applications for its Ecuador study abroad July 21-Aug. 9 for undergraduate and graduate students, honors students, teachers, friends and adult family to experience the land and people of the Andes Mountains, Amazon rainforest and the Galapagos Islands. Geog-

raphy, earth science, culture and history are part of this four-credit course titled "Environment, Society and Culture of Ecuador." Out-of-state students are welcome, and pay in-state tuition during the summer. For more information, contact Betty Smith, besmith@eiu.edu, at (217) 581-6340.

www.eiu.edu/~edabroad/programs/facultyled/smith

Student learning experience in China

Global Interactions Inc. is hosting its fourth-annual youth leadership program, "Challenge: Tomorrow," which pairs American students with their Chinese counterparts. The program includes studying science, culture and language and is geared toward students ages 12-16. Teachers, counselors and advisers also are needed. Participants will travel and learn in Shanghai and Beijing. The event will run from July 8-28. For more information, contact Jerrie Ueberle at challenge@globalinteractions.org or (602) 906-8886.

www.globalinteractions.org

Energy — making a real-life connection

Districts can send a team of teachers and administrators to one of two remaining Energy Management for Schools Workshops being held March 5 in Morehead and March 6 in London. Districts should send a team, composed of teachers, administrators and facilities directors, to strategize how they can improve student learning and reduce the district's energy consumption. For more information, call (502) 852-0965 or e-mail registration@kppc.org with subject: Energy Management Workshop.

<http://louisville.edu/kppc/news-1/2009/energymanagementworkshopforschools.html>

'Shifting Education and the Economy into High Gear'

The 2009 Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Forum on Education Policy, titled "Shifting Education and the Economy into High Gear," will be July 8-10 in Nashville, Tenn. How education can be an engine to ignite the economy will be explored. The 2009 National Forum will feature more than 20 sessions — highlighted by powerful dialogues and deep discussions on a broad spectrum of education challenges. ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate com-

pact devoted to education at all levels. At the 2009 National Forum, participants can network with chief state school officers and state higher education executive officers; local and state school board members; teachers; principals; and state and national education stakeholders.

E-mail nationalforum@ecs.org for more information.

Kentucky Literacy Research Symposium

The fifth Kentucky Literacy Research Symposium (KLRS) will be March 13-14. This unique KLRS will be conducted in a different format this year as it addresses the specialized topic of Response to Intervention (RTI). March 13 will have a research focus, with national researchers gathering to discuss research related to RTI. March 14 will be for practitioners to assemble to learn about research-based literacy interventions and issues related to RTI implementation. Participants also will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue about RTI.

www.kentuckyliteracy.org

Marine science summer workshops

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab, a marine science education center located along coastal Alabama, is offering teacher workshops and student programs focusing on marine science. All program costs include housing and meals are covered unless otherwise stated. Graduate credit is available for an additional fee.

<http://dhp.disl.org/teachertraining.htm>

Numeracy conference

The Kentucky Center for Mathematics Numeracy Conference is set for March 5-6 in Louisville. The conference program is posted at <http://kentucky-mathematics.org>. Conference fee will cover cost of refreshments, meeting space, printing and administration. For more information, contact Julie Sullivan, sullivanju@nku.edu or (859) 527-7690.

Community-based science inquiry training/study

The University of Kentucky has room for a few more schools in its Innovative Technology Experience for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program. This summer, the school will be focusing on 3-D modeling skills. The

(Continued on page 15)



Photo by Amy Wallot

White Hall Elementary School (Madison County)

BULLETIN BOARD *(continued)*



Photo by Amy Wallot

Capturing Lincoln's Kentucky connection

Mo Rocca, a popular contributor for "CBS Sunday Morning," interviewed Bridgeport Elementary School (Franklin County) primary student Dan McDonald at the Kentucky Historical Society's HistoryMobile on Jan. 14. Behind them is McDonald's brother, Ben. The CBS program's crew visited the HistoryMobile's exhibit "Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln" in Frankfort to gather footage for a segment focused on Kentucky's tribute to Lincoln and the bicentennial commemorative period.

UK Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment is accepting applications for the event, scheduled July 7-18. Teams of three to five teachers attending the institute will participate in a year-long community-based science inquiry study with their students to study natural resource problems in their communities using GIS, remote sensing and three-dimensional modeling technology. The National Science Foundation is funding the program. Accepted applicants receive innovative teacher training, stipends, field trip support, materials and ongoing technical support and collaboration with professionals from around the state. For more information or to request an application, contact Carol Hanley, chanley@uky.edu or (859) 333-8248.

Contests & Other Events

Sixth Annual Create a KYVL Video Contest for STLP students

Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL) is sponsoring a video contest spotlighting the creative talents and the technologi-

cal knowledge and skills of the Student Technology Leadership Program students. KYVL will use the public service announcements to create awareness of its information resources, which are available to all Kentucky residents. Entries and accompanying storyboards, scripts, and other items are due to Betsy Hughes at the Kentucky Virtual Library office by April 20. If you intend to submit an entry, e-mail Hughes at betsy.hughes@ky.gov. The winning entries from the previous years can be found at www.kyvl.org/html/k12/k12.shtml. For more information, call (502) 573-1555, ext. 271.

Summer scholarships available for preparation to be counselors

Some Kentucky schools and communities are experiencing a shortage of counselors. To help meet the need, scholarship assistance is being offered by the Kentucky Counseling Association. Those interested in becoming school counselors and who already possess an undergraduate degree can get a jump

start this summer with help with tuition and textbooks. The association provides grants of \$100 for textbooks. Each of the participating universities, listed below, will provide one tuition waiver (preference will be granted to beginning master's students who have earned less than 15 hours):

- Campbellsville University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Lindsey Wilson College
- Morehead State University
- University of Louisville
- Xavier University

Documentation of acceptance by the participating university and a letter of recommendation are required, along with a completed application. The deadline for submitting materials is April 15.

www.kyca.org

ThinkQuest Narrative Competition

Students can unleash their creativity and collaboration skills on the world stage and win exciting prizes by competing in the ThinkQuest Narrative Competition. This new competition will allow students the opportunity to collaborate with their peers in Kentucky and around the world. The ThinkQuest Narrative Competition invites students to publish their ideas on issues of global importance using ThinkQuest Projects as their online publishing tool. Entries are due by May 4. Log in to www.thinkquest.org and click the "Competition" tab for more information.

Global Systems Science

Global Systems Science (GSS) is an integrated, interdisciplinary course for high school, consisting of nine student books, teacher guides and Interpreting Digital Images software. Each GSS book deals with a societal issue that requires science for full understanding. The books may be sequenced in a custom one-year integrated science course or serve as supplementary materials for existing high school biology, physics, chemistry, Earth science or social studies courses.

<http://lhs.berkeley.edu/gss/order>

The World is Your Stage

The stage is set for high school students who have unique stories to tell about their world. The 2009 Adobe School Innovation Awards will honor the most innovative print,

Web and video projects created with Adobe software. Students can win valuable Adobe software — and an exciting awards ceremony will be held in the Best-of-Best winner's community. The deadline to enter is May 8.

www.adobe.com/education/solutions/k12/awards

Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 class of inductees into the Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame. The deadline is July 15. For more information, contact Cathie Bryant, cathie.bryant@wku.edu, or (270) 745-4664.

http://edtech.wku.edu/deans_office/GovLBN_KY-THF.htm

Patient advocate scholarships

The Patient Advocate Foundation is offering 10 \$3,000 scholarships for the 2009-10 school year. These scholarships are for young people under 25 who deal with a life-threatening/debilitating disease and want to further their education.

The American Cancer Society also offers yearly scholarships for cancer survivors. Call (800) 227-2345 or go to www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_5_1x_College_Scholarships_for_Cancer_Survivors.asp find out who is eligible.

www.patientadvocate.org

Resources

Lincoln paperback readers

To celebrate the Lincoln Bicentennial, the Library of America has created five free "Lincoln in American Memory" paperback readers featuring excerpts of essays, speeches, poems, plays, fiction and nonfiction about Abraham Lincoln.

<http://lincoln.loa.org/readers>

Understanding science Web site

UCMP (University of California Museum of Paleontology) has just published a Web site entitled "Understanding Science" based on its current "Understanding Evolution" Web site. The new site has resources and information that can be used to help students understand what science is and what it isn't.

<http://undsci.berkeley.edu>

Owensboro students go on history treasure hunt

Julie Ellis

Owensboro School District

On a cold morning in November, nine Owensboro Middle School students set out to locate Kentucky historical markers in Owensboro and the surrounding Daviess County area using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit. To date, students have used the GPS unit to obtain geographical coordinates of 24 historical markers for a statewide mapping project for the Kentucky Historical Society.

Using technology to discover history proved a valuable learning experience for the team. Accompanied by Owensboro Independent School District's Director of Technology Ron Milliner and Gifted and Talented Coordinator Sheila Depp, the students traveled to each marker. At each location, one student held the GPS unit close to the marker — testing the best signal location and confirming accuracy. Another student recorded coordinates (latitude, longitude and elevation), and a third student took a digital photo of the marker.

Among the markers they located were the Hazen A. Dean (First Kentuckian to receive "70 Continuous Years of Service Award" from the Boy Scouts of America) marker; the location of the Daviess County Courthouse that burned in 1865; the home of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Moneta J. Sleet Jr.; the world's largest sassafras tree; the childhood home of retired U. S. Sen. Wendell H. Ford; and the site where Josiah Henson, one of the characters on which Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was based, had lived.

After tracking down markers and recording data, Owensboro Middle 8th-grade student Abby Meyer said, "I never realized how much history Owensboro holds." Catherine Clark, a 7th-grade student, found it "... cool the way you simply hold up a device and a satellite far in space can recognize it." Seventh-grade student Sydney Smith said, "I've never really taken the time to stop and read the signs. It's really interesting to know about some of Owensboro's history."

Back in the classroom, they used a number of resources to research history surrounding each site. Sarah Flaherty, a



Photo by Julie Ellis

Owensboro Middle School (Owensboro Independent) students Dutch Dohrenwend, left, and Philip Lanz, with the help of Gifted and Talented Coordinator Sheila Depp, use a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit to plot and record the geographical coordinates of a marker at the birthplace of retired United States Sen. Wendell H. Ford. Back in the classroom, students enter GPS data, photos and historical information onto a project Web site.

7th-grade student, said that learning about where and why markers are there made the project interesting to her. Eighth-grade student Philip Lanz said he enjoyed discovering what and who had impacted history at a specific place and to use the GPS units to see the coordinates, record them and enter them on the Web site.

Once all data was collected, students entered the information by computer to the Mapping Kentucky History (MKH) project Web site. The MKH site allowed these young researchers to enter not only geographical locations, but also to add digital photos relating to each marker and put their writing skills to work with narratives relating to the sites.

When first presented the opportunity to

participate in the mapping program, Depp and Milliner saw it as a project that would closely tie with the Kentucky Department of Education's *Program of Studies* for the middle school level with an outcome that would eventually be put to good use in the district's 4th- and 5th-grade social studies classrooms, where students study Owensboro history.

"Two key ideas in the *Program of Studies* for the middle school age level focus on geography and historical perspective. What better way to integrate both than taking students to the historical marker site, charting the geography and studying the history surrounding the site," said Depp.

She also said students are using geographical tools such as maps, photos, satellite

images and databases to analyze particular locations. "Visits to sites are helping them understand the historical significance of their community," she added.

On the technical side, Kentucky's Academic Expectations call upon schools to give students multiple opportunities to use technology for information, communication and productivity and research.

Students used a variety of appropriate technology to collect and communicate information; to communicate and collaborate online; to summarize and communicate results; and to productively share information through print and digital formats for authentic audiences. For Owensboro Middle students, the project is a useful connection between what they learn in each content area and the real world.

Referring to the next phase of the project, 8th-grader Cody Jennings said, "I've learned more about history, and we are going to help other students learn about our history, too." The next phase of the local project will be putting everything that has been collected into a video format that can be used by younger students.

Owensboro Middle School students who have participated in the project are 7th-graders Clark, Andrew Dube, Sarah Flaherty, Jarrod Piper and Smith and 8th-graders Dohrenwend, Cody Jennings, Philip Lanz and Meyer.

For their efforts (completing 75 percent or more of the markers in their assigned area), Owensboro Middle will get to keep the GPS unit for future projects.

Partners in the MKH project are Morehead State University's Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy's Kentucky Geospatial Education, Research and Outreach; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Height Modernization Project; United States Geological Survey's Kentucky Phase II Names Project; and Kentucky Historical Society Roadside Marker Project.

MORE INFO...

<http://markers.msudev.com>

Sheila Depp, (270) 686-1000, sheila.depp@owensboro.kyschools.us